

This Week in Congress

August 24, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

KansasBio Legislative Leadership Award

On Thursday evening, I attended a Kansas Bioscience Organization (KansasBio) event in Wichita. KansasBio is a not-for-profit organization that serves as the voice of the bioscience industry and research institutions in Kansas. At the event, I received the KansasBio Legislative Leadership Award, which is given to a public official from Kansas who has demonstrated

leadership on behalf of the bioscience industry.

Bioscience research is a top priority for our state and Kansas companies are working to expand our state's bioscience research capacities. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security declared that Manhattan will be the future home of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, a state-of-the-art bioscience research lab situated on the campus of Kansas State University. In addition, the University of Kansas Medical Center is currently working to obtain designation as a cancer center through the National Cancer Institute. Each of these university facilities would specialize in bioscience research to better protect citizens and enhance patient treatments.

I was honored to receive this award from KansasBio, an organization committed to advancing medical research in Kansas; accelerating the growth of the human, animal, plant and industrial biosciences; and enhancing the state's bioscience business and research climate. Thank you to KansasBio Board of Directors and to President & CEO Angela Kreps for her hospitality and warm welcome.

Attending Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association Convention

I participated in the Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association's (KIOGA) 72nd annual meeting in Wichita on Monday. KIOGA was established in 1937 to promote and improve the economic conditions for the Kansas independent oil industry. At the convention, I participated as a panelist for the session Energy Policy and Political Reality - A Changing Perspective. This

gave me, and members of the Kansas Congressional delegation, the opportunity to discuss policies taking shape in Congress that affect Kansas independent oil and gas producers.

The discussion during the panel session centered on the Cap and Trade legislation recently passed by the House of Representatives. I discussed my opposition to the legislation that would increase the price of transportation fuel and raise electric rates in Midwestern states that depend on coal-fired plants. Kansas utilities would have to pay for permission to emit greenhouse gases, as opposed to coastal states that have the ability to generate electricity by hydroelectric power. I believe there is no more devastating piece of legislation for rural America, for the Midwest, for agriculture, for farmers and for small business than this piece of legislation at a time like this economy.

I also shared my opposition to President Obama's budget proposal to raise taxes on independent oil and gas producers. In the President's budget, many of the tax increases will more substantially impact small independent oil producers than large integrated oil companies. If enacted, the President's proposal could push many small Kansas producers out of business and increase the cost of gasoline and diesel fuel.

Thanks to Edward Cross, KIOGA president, for moderating the panel discussion. Congratulations to Dick Schremmer, president of Haysville's Bear Petroleum, for being named the new KIOGA chairman.

Urging Congress to Fix Medicaid Generic Prescription Reimbursement

As Co-Chairmen of the Congressional Community Pharmacy Coalition, I, along with Congressman Marion Berry of Arkansas, requested that the House Energy and Commerce Committee help fix Medicaid generic prescription reimbursement and preserve Medicaid patients' access to community pharmacies. In order to support pharmacies in Kansas and ensure patient access to life-saving, cost-effective prescription medicines, Congress must set an accurate pharmacy reimbursement benchmark. The current benchmark, known as Average Manufacturers Price (AMP), is insufficient to cover pharmacies' Medicaid prescription costs and could force pharmacies out of business.

I urged Congress to propose a sufficient AMP reimbursement for pharmacies to help them provide needed prescription medications to patients. [Click here](#) to read the letter that Congressman Berry and I sent to the committee.

[Click here](#)

to read the press release sent by National Community Pharmacists Association in response to our AMP letter.

Touring Saint Luke's Hospital South in Overland Park

On Friday, I visited Saint Luke's Hospital South in Overland Park to tour the facility. As Chair of the House Rural Health Care Coalition, it is valuable for me to visit hospitals to talk with

Kansans about their thoughts on health care reform. As our country is at a crossroads in the debate on health care, I am grateful to have the opportunity to talk with leaders in the health care industry to learn about their concerns and thoughts on the current health care legislation.

Thank you to Kathy Howell, hospital CEO and Tim Van Zandt, Government Relations Representative.

Hugoton Community Visit

On Monday, I stopped in Hugoton to visit with members of the community. During my stop, I visited Country Gardens store, the local paper, the *Hugoton Hermes* and Bloomhart Drugs where I talked to residents about topics ranging from Cap and Trade legislation to health care reform. I also visited Hugoton Hospital where I had the pleasure of speaking with Linda Stalcup, hospital CEO, and Dave Piper, hospital CFO. Thank you to all Hugoton residents for welcoming me during my visit.

Visiting Allen County

Tea Party Meeting: On Friday, I attended a TEA Party meeting in Iola. Tea Party members are those who organize events to ask members of Congress to stop rampant government spending and waste. During the meeting, we discussed health care reform legislation and increased government spending. I explained that I am one of only 17 members of the House of Representatives to oppose every bailout and stimulus proposal including President George W. Bush's rebate check program. During this time, Kansas households are balancing their checkbooks and operating on a budget. The government should do the same. Thank you to Virginia Crossland-Macha for inviting me to the event.

Allen County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting: Also on Friday, I talked to residents at the Allen County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Iola. During the meeting, I talked about specific issues, including my opposition to Cap and Trade legislation, Food Safety legislation and new regulations. County Farm Bureau members keep me informed about issues important to Kansas farmers and ranchers. I was glad to have the opportunity to discuss current policies and issues with them. Thank you to Debbie Bearden for inviting me to speak. Thanks to the following Allen County Farm Bureau officers: Ginger Roberts, president; Terry Powelson, vice president; Darin Tidd, secretary/treasurer; and Denise Mentzer, women's chair. Also thanks to the following Allen County Farm Bureau directors: Darrell Monfort; Layne Sterling; Josha Herrmann; Rita Berntsen; and David Tidd.

From Washington to Home: 2009 Annual Listening Tour Continues

I continued traveling around Kansas this week conducting town halls on my thirteenth Annual Listening Tour. These meetings help me stay in touch with Kansans and learn about what issues continue to be important to them. This week, I held town halls in Morton, Stevens and Seward counties. During each of these town halls, I had the opportunity to speak about health

care reform, the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), immigration, No Child Left Behind, irresponsible government spending and my opposition to Cap and Trade legislation. I also discussed my strong opposition to the transfer of terrorist detainees from Guantanamo Bay detention facility to the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth.

Residents are invited to attend the town halls to share their thoughts with me on current issues. Below is a list of my upcoming town hall tour stops in the month of August:

Saturday, August 29

Smith County Tour Stop, Smith Center

Time: 2:15 to 3:15 PM

Location: Smith County Memorial Hospital, Conference Room

Address: 614 S. Main Street

Jewell County Tour Stop, Mankato

Time: 4:00 to 5:00 PM

Location: Mankato Community Building

Address: 214 N. High Street

Friday, September 4

Stafford County Tour Stop, Stafford

Time: 1:30 to 2:30 PM

Location: Stafford High School

Room: Commons area

Address: 418 E. Broadway Street

Pratt County Tour Stop, Pratt

Time: 3:15 to 4:15 PM

Location: Pratt Community College

Room: TBD

Address: 348 NE State Road 61

[Click here](#) to view the listening tour schedule and the areas I have stopped this year. [Click here](#) to view photos from my recent town halls.

Visiting the American Cotton Growers Denim Mill in Littlefield, Texas

After my town hall meeting in Seward County, I visited the American Cotton Growers denim mill in Littlefield, Texas. The plant is the only farmer-owned textile mill and apparel manufacturer in the world and is the largest denim manufacturer in America. Kansas cotton growers have over \$1.1 million invested in the business and much of the cotton grown in Kansas is made into

high quality denim at this plant and sold across the globe. During my conversations, I learned that the Kansas cotton crop looks great this year. Thanks to Dick Cooper of Liberal and Plant Manager Brian Gregory for making this visit possible. [Click here](#) to view photos of my visit.

Ribbon Cutting for Vehicle in Hays

Recently, I attended the ribbon cutting to observe the acceptance of a newly federally funded vehicle that will serve Northwest Kansans. The vehicle replaces an older model in the access fleet and will provide public transportation for residents in Hays and Ellis counties. Especially in rural communities, accessibility to safe transportation is necessary. Thank you to the Mayor of Hays, Ron Mellick, and Ellis County Commission Chairman, Perry Henman. Thanks also to Ron Straight of Hays for inviting me. [Click here](#) to view a photo from the event.

Very truly yours,

Jerry